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[Alice Buchanan Walker]

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W. W. Dixon,

Winnsboro, S. C. 390575 ALICE BUCHANAN WALKER 82 YEARS OLD. (WHITE)

Mrs. Alice Buchanan Walker is a cultured gentlewoman, a widow, who resides in a handsome two-story house on South Congress Street in the town of Winnsboro, South Carolina.

“I am a lineal descendant of Thomas Woodward, the regulator mentioned in the Colonial accounts of the early history of the State under the royal charter. Captain Woodwood was Captain of Rangers in the Revolutionary War. My grandmother was Anne Wyche Williamson, a niece of Colonel Thomas Taylor, who figured prominently in the early history of the State. The late circuit judge, Osmond W. Buchanan, was my eldest brother. My father, Dr. Robert Buchanan, married Rebecca Woodward, and I was born in Winnsboro, S. C., June 20, 1856.

“I learned the alphabet and how to read in our home at my mother's knee. My first school attendance was in a private school taught by Mr. & Mrs. Josiah O'Bear. Mr. O'Bear was the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church on East Liberty Street, Winnsboro. I next attended the school for young girls, taught by Mrs. Catherine Ladd in the old Priscilla Ketchin brick house still standing on Congress Street and now used as an apartment house. Later, I studied Latin and methematics under a very rough teacher, Mr. Benjamin Rhett Stuart. I attended Columbia College and was graduated at this institution, taking first honor in the literary department and in music. Professor Samuel Jones was president of the college when I was graduated. For years afterward, I was invited to play at commencements and to assist in the school plays and charades.

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“My parents did not permit me to see the Yankees nor anything of the confusion in the town caused by Sherman's 'bummers', but the glare of burning homes and the sky-piercing flames from St. John's Episcopal Church awed and terrified me greatly.

“Twelve hundred slaves followed the Yankee army from this locality under the belief that they were to be given forty acres of land, a mule, and a milch cow. In crossing over to the Lancaster County side of Catawba River on flat boats and rafts, many of these Negroes were drowned. Many found their way back, naked and half dead from cold and hunger. All our slaves went off under this delusion except two Negro boys, Henry and Reason. The Yankees had killed or driven off every animal on my Grandfather Osmond Woodward's place, except three cows and one old horse. They destroyed all vehicles but a rockaway. Reason and Henry promised to do the milking, till the garden, and peddle the milk, butter, and vegetables with the old horse and rockaway vehicles if allowed to stay on. I have kept the old kitchen table that they made. It has been repaired once or twice but it still stands and is in use in my kitchen this morning. I would like for you to see it. Both Negro boys grew to manhood. Reason stayed here and became a good carpenter, but Henry moved to Arkansas.

“Among the young ladies of my society and set were the daughters of Col. James H. Rion, Kittie, Floride, and Maggie Rion, Deborah Wolfe, Annie Beaty, Sallie, Hattie, and Annie McMaster and Ella, Lill, and Marion Elliott.

“You ask about the style of dress? The old hoop skirt was before our day, but corsets and bustles were worn. White was the prevailing color for hose, and we wore black shiny slippers with moderately high heels. The head 3 dress? The hair was worn high on the head, on a chignon. Earrings in the ears and gems in the hair were part of an evening dress.

“Hats? We were partial to the flat, wide-brimmed, leghorn hats. A wreath of flowers encircled the top of the brim and long streamers or bands of ribbon floated from the

sides and could be tied under the chin. The winter hats were more gorgeous. They were trained with ostrich plumes and feathers. There was a hat called 'white chip hat', which was adorned with bright colored feathers. Girls and ladies wore more jewelry then, than nowadays.

“Nearly all elderly women had an outdoor bonnet made of gingham cloth, with splints in it to hold its form and to keep it from flapping down over the eyes and face. All the girls in our set rode horseback. They wore a riding habit. The back part of it came down to cover the saddle, and the skirt part was a guarantee that her male escort would never get a glimpse of the hosiery covering her lower extremities. A riding party was a gay party, and sometimes we secured Major Woodward's pack of hounds and went fox hunting with the men.

We had many dances in the Thespian Hall on Washington Street. Jazz music had not come into favor when I was young. The big apple, the Charleston, the fox-trot, and the two-step were unheard of in my generation of fun and frolic. The polka, the gallop, and the waltz are what we learned and enjoyed at our dances.

“The boys in our set, as I remember them, were T. W. Lauderdale, J. F. McMaster, Creighton McMaster, Willie Calhoun, Preston Rion, and my husband, David V. Walker.

“On the 2d day of May, the Gordon Light Infantry always gave a prize drill and picnic. There were speakings and the presentation of prizes. That night the annual military ball was given. This was the social event of the 4 year. Many visitors from Columbia and the surrounding towns attended.

“Mrs. Ladd's school for girls gave many concerts. I remember I sang 'Buttercup in Pinafore' at one of the concerts.

“Visiting? There was much more social visiting in ny girlhood days than at the present time. People from the town visited such homes in the country as Major Woodward's and Mr. E. P. Mobley's and General E. G. Palmer's at Ridgeway.

“One of the visits the Rion girls always looked forward to with keen pleasure was a visit to the home of Dr. Baruch, in Camden. On these visits to Camden, we saw the splendid exciting horse races. We also attended a ball, where we made many acquaintances and friendships. Some of these friendships have endured throughout the years.

“Yes, freckles were the terror of many a girl's social days. A girl whose skin was susceptible to these little turkey egg dots, washed her face every night in buttermilk and wore a gingham bonnet out in the yard. Her hands were ever encased in gloves, however hot the day. Yes, all women and girls carried a smelling salts bottle with them. I think the affection went out of style about thirty years ago.

“Women were sometimes worshipped for the abundance and length of their hair. It was a custom to save every strand as it clung to the tooth of the comb, and, when the strands became sufficient in numbers a switch was made of them and replaced in the coils of the living hair.

“Courtesy and gallantry of men toward girls and women? Now let's see if there is a real lack of it nowadays. If so, let's try to discover the contributing causes. what you complain about may be a superficial appearance rather than a deep rooted intentional disregard of the difference of sex.

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Aristocratic society before and after the war was composed of planters, lawyers, physicians, and the clergy; bankers were next admitted. Shop keepers or merchants came later. This society got its ideas from Scott's novels. Women were ever on a pedestal and would have remained there forever had not [Don Quixote?] been written; woman

suffrage came about; the public school system established; and coeducational facilities provided. Again the industrialization of the State, cotton mills, women bookkeepers and stenographers make the old style of gallantry absurd and out of date. But, wherever and whenever the girl is worth it, there still abides, deep down in the heart of every gentleman, the same chivalry of the male for the female as it existed in the days of Sir Walter Scott and his Ivanhoe."